

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Kimiko Watanabe

Kimiko Watanabe, of Okinawan ancestry, is the sixth of Saburo and Kama Tengan's seven children. She was born in Ha'ikū, Maui, on May 9, 1921.

The Tengan family moved to Lahaina, where Watanabe attended Kamehameha III School. When she was eight, they relocated to Mō'ili'ili. Anahola, Kaua'i, where her father worked in the pineapple fields, was her next home. There, Watanabe attended Ko'olau School. The family moved again to Wai'anae when she was eleven. She went to Wahiawā School, then to Leilehua High School.

After the ninth grade, Watanabe left school and worked as a presser at Abo Laundry. Then she worked as a maid before being hired again for laundry work, this time at Schofield Barracks.

In 1938 she married Kiho Uyehara, a commercial fisherman. The couple lived in a Kukui Street apartment in Honolulu, where their son was born in 1941. On December 7, a neighbor came to tell her that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. Watanabe's husband had gone out fishing on the sampan *Kiho Maru* a few days earlier. On December 8, he and two other members of the crew were killed by strafing from American planes. One other crew member, Seiki Arakaki, was injured but survived.

A young widow with a child, Watanabe found a job as a waitress in 1942. She then worked at Libby, McNeil, & Libby pineapple cannery until she married Tadao Watanabe in 1950. She moved to their home in Waialua, where she still resides. In addition to her eldest son, she has three children by her second marriage.

Tape No. 22-31-1-92

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Kimiko Watanabe (KW)

April 21, 1992

Waialua, O'ahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Kimiko [Tengan Uyehara] Watanabe on April 21, 1992, at her home in Waialua, O'ahu. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, why don't we get started. Mrs. Watanabe, let's start. Why don't you tell me first when you were born and where you were born.

KW: I was born in Ha'ikū, Maui. The year?

WN: Mm hmm [yes].

KW: Oh, May 9, 1921.

WN: What were your parents doing [in Ha'ikū]?

KW: I don't know what they were doing in Ha'ikū, Maui, where I was born. But Lahaina Pump Camp, you know, it's a small place and he [KW's father] must have been working plantation. Did they have plantation over there?

WN: Well, Pioneer Mill [Company] in Lahaina.

KW: Yeah, because when we left over there [Maui] I was only about eight, you know.

WN: So your father was doing something in Ha'ikū first. Then you folks moved?

KW: Yeah, moved to Lahaina.

WN: So you don't remember Ha'ikū at all?

KW: No. I went [back] several years ago, where I was born. But then I can't find. I don't know. It's all different. Even Lahaina, where we were living, the neighbor was still there but the house that they said that we were living in was all crumbled up. All old. Not too much over there. And then over there *kara* we move over here [O'ahu]. We stayed here for a while and then my parents moved to Kaua'i. Boy, they really traveled, my parents.

WN: So you were born in Ha'ikū . . .

KW: Uh huh [yes].

WN: . . . then you folks moved to Lahaina . . .

KW: Uh huh [yes].

WN: . . . and then you were there until you were eight years old.

KW: Yeah.

WN: So what do you remember about Lahaina?

KW: It's a nice camp. It was real nice at that time. It was real friendly people we had. Well, I stayed there. That's all I remember. We used to walk from Lahaina Pump Camp to Kamehameha III School every day.

WN: How far was that?

KW: Oh, I don't know how far that is. You see, Kamehameha III School is way down by the shoreline, by the beach. And then Lahaina [Pump Camp] was way on the other end. We used to walk, I don't know how far that is.

WN: So your father was employed by the sugar mill?

KW: I think so. I'm not real sure whether he was employed by that sugar company or not. And then we moved here, and we went Kaua'i. And Kaua'i, he worked in the pineapple field, I think. You know, where we were living was the pineapple field.

WN: So Kaua'i was Anahola?

KW: Anahola. And we went to school over there, Ko'olau School.

WN: Ko'olau School?

KW: Ko'olau.

WN: So you were eight years old in Lahaina. Do you remember what you were doing to have good fun as a child in Lahaina?

KW: I don't know. I remember we used to play marbles (laughs). Now they don't play. We did. And not too much activities that I was doing over there, you know. I remember one day, we didn't go Japanese[-language] school and then we were playing marbles and my brother caught us.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, we were talking about marbles.

KW: That's all I remember, playing marbles.

WN: Yeah. Did you have chores at home to do?

KW: Oh yeah. Clean house. Yeah, we had to do that.

WN: You were---let's see, how many of you in the family? Oh, seven of you.

KW: Yeah, but then one of them was gone and my oldest brother was already over here [O'ahu]. He wasn't living with us. My two sisters above me and my younger brother and my older brother, the second oldest one. We all lived over there.

WN: Did your mother work at all or was she at home?

KW: I think she worked in the cane field too, I think. She worked hard.

WN: She had to raise seven of you.

KW: One died young. One of the brothers.

WN: Okay, so over in Lahaina, too, did you folks get together sometimes as a community or as a group for holidays like *Oshōgatsu*, New Year's, anything?

KW: Well, *Oshōgatsu*, yeah. You know, neighbors. When we moved to Kaua'i and over here [O'ahu] and we lived in Mō'ili'ili too for a while—my family really traveled. And then when we moved to Wahiawā, then we stayed there quite a long time. Then we had gatherings like New Year's, like that. All family come. That's one of the things we looked forward to—New Year's.

WN: So you lived in Lahaina till age eight, then you folks moved to Wahiawā?

KW: We came over here [Honolulu]. Where did I stay? Not Wahiawā. In town, Mō'ili'ili. And then we went to Kaua'i. And we stayed there, I don't know, how many years? I know couple of years. And then we came back. I even went to Kūhiō School.

WN: Oh, when you were living in Mō'ili'ili?

KW: Yeah, and then we moved to Wai'anae. One year, I think, we stayed there. I was about eleven or something. And then, we came to Wahiawā. We stayed there long time. I went to Wahiawā School, and then I went to Leilehua [High] School, but I didn't finish—just till ninth grade, because my parents were real poor. They couldn't even afford to send me to [intermediate and high] school. Only till sixth grade, you know, they was going to let me go. And then the principal of the school sent a letter to my parents, "How come your daughter is so young and she can't continue school?" But my father couldn't afford it. So we left the letter like that and my oldest brother was working for CCC. Remember, Civilian Conservation Corps, in Wahiawā? He was working there, he came one weekend, he saw the letter and he said, "Kay, how come you not going school?"

"Oh, Papa said I cannot go."

So he said, "You go." He got me one new dress and shoes and then I started to go. I went till ninth grade.

WN: Did your sisters go to school?

KW: No, none of them. I think I was the only one that went till ninth grade. The other ones all, maybe eighth grade they finish or something like that.

WN: What about your brothers?

KW: They didn't go till ninth grade either, all of them. I was the only one that went till ninth grade.

WN: So your father wanted you folks to start working, then.

KW: Yeah.

WN: How did you feel about moving around so much?

KW: I didn't like it. It's real hard. You know, you get used to with the children over there. You get to know them. That's why I hate to move. I live [today] in this termite's house. I really don't want to move. I hate that idea. I lived in Kukui Street thirteen years.

WN: Thirty-eight, 1938-1950.

KW: Yeah, thirteen?

WN: Twelve to thirteen, yeah.

KW: See, I didn't want to move. I stayed there till I got married [to second husband, Tadao Watanabe, in 1950]. I didn't want to move. And even over here [Waialua], I don't care to move. I feel real comfortable. I don't like moving here to there. I don't like the idea.

WN: So your father, I guess, kept changing jobs then.

KW: Yeah. Wahiawā, he was working in the pineapple field.

WN: Of all the places you lived, up until Kukui Street in 1938, which place did you like the most?

KW: Among all the places? Over here. Well, Kukui was the best of those before I got married and moved here. But I like here [Waialua].

WN: So I guess the places that you lived the longest, you like the best.

KW: Yeah, uh huh, because I don't like the idea of moving town to town like my parents did.

WN: Do you know if your mother liked to move?

KW: You know, *ano goro*, they all listen to the husbands, Japan-style. Of course now, the wife gets something to say if they don't want to move. But at that time, everything "Yes, yes," to the husband. I guess my mother just went along with my father when he wants to move. But then my father was real good when he was sober. You know when I had Dickie [son Richard Uyehara, in 1941]? He comes over weekend, he go and buy *menpachi*, fish, and he brings it

over and he cooked soup for me and then he wash the diapers. He was real different man when he was sober. Yeah, he was real kind. That's why if my boys, if they ever come home drunk, I told them I'm going to kick them out of the house. So none of them drink. I really going to take them out of the house. I don't want them to live in the house.

My father died not even one month after my husband died. December 8, [1941], my husband was killed. My mother was living Wahiawā all by herself, so she came [to Kukui Street] to live with me and she took care of Dickie while I went to work, so everything worked out real good after that. Of course, we had hard time with the war. It was rough but she was able to come and live with me. Otherwise. . . .

WN: That was a rough time.

KW: Yeah, otherwise, I can't go to work. I can't hire a baby-sitter, watching Dickie.

WN: So prior to living at Kukui Street, you lived in Wahiawā, yeah?

KW: Yeah. After I got married [in 1938], I lived Kukui Street.

WN: Okay. So in Wahiawā what kinds of jobs did you have?

KW: I was working Abo Laundry.

WN: What did you do at Abo Laundry?

KW: Well, we sort out and then we iron. Press, presser. You know, trousers and that kind. You know, they have a big presser. And that's what we were doing. I worked there for a while, cheap pay but that's all that they can afford. Then I went to work as a maid while I was in Wahiawā. And then I worked at the post laundry, Schofield [Barracks]. I worked till I got married in 1938. When I got married I moved in town. That's why I stayed at Kukui Street.

WN: Okay, so while you were going to school at Leilehua, you were working?

KW: Maid, part-time.

WN: You mean, this is going to people's houses?

KW: Yeah, uh huh.

WN: How did you meet your husband?

KW: This one? Kiho?

WN: Uyehara, yes.

KW: A friend of his, Mr. Miyasato, brought pictures and then they showed me the picture and they took my picture to them. My folks really wanted me to get married. So they agreed to it. They said, "Oh, Kimiko if you [and] Kiho got married," they said they'd be happy.

So, I said okay. That's how we got married.

WN: You were how old then?

KW: I was seventeen.

WN: Seventeen. So you finished school and you were working at that . . .

KW: That's when I went in town. And that's when I stayed Kukui Street [1938].

WN: So you were living in Wahiawā when you . . .

KW: Met my . . .

WN: . . . and your husband met. Okay, I see.

KW: And although we were poor, they made us a good wedding. Real Japanese style. Like a *montsuki* wear. So it was a nice wedding but it [marriage] only lasted about three years.

WN: Okay, so you got married in 1938, and he was already living Kukui Street?

KW: Yeah, he was a fisherman already. He was a nice man. The first thing I would ask, if he drinks or gamble because my mother warned me, never get married to a man who drinks and get drunk. So, "*Sake mono mae dake no good boy de kara.*" ["They'd say, 'He doesn't even drink *sake* because he's a good boy.'"] You know, they were all happy for me. And he didn't drink. Otherwise I won't get married to him.

WN: What about the idea of marrying a fisherman? Was that. . .

KW: Well, that didn't ever occur to be anything. I didn't feel anything. You see, fisherman, they stay out [at sea] ten, eleven days and they come back. And when they come back, only about three days they stay home and then pack ice and they go out. So within that three years time that I was married to him, I don't think I lived with him for one year or so. He was more out in the sea than he was with me. But then the funny thing is, [before] the last trip that he went out, he said, "Oh, Kimiko *kono tabi ga ichiban* last." He said, "*Age no shigoto surutte.*" You know, he's going to work on land, this going to be my last trip—fisherman. He said when he comes back he's going to work on land. He told me he felt he missed Dickie too. That was the last wish telling me. Just like, I don't know if he knew he was going or what. Of course that, nobody knows, but then the last trip was going to be that one. So three years we married, I don't think we stayed together one year. Because when he goes out and with Dickie alone, I used to come stay with my mother folks, Wahiawā. I don't want to stay over there [Kukui Street] alone. So I used to come. And when he [KW's husband] comes home, he calls me and then I used to go back, you know.

WN: What about your husband's family? Were they living there too? Kukui Street?

KW: My sister-in-law, the one married to my brother. My husband's sister is married to my brother.

WN: Oh is that right? I didn't know that.

KW: Yeah. So that's the only one. The parents were in Japan. But they all died too. One young

brother, I thought he died during the war, but he died when he was young.

WN: So, Dickie was born in '41?

KW: Yeah.

WN: So he was an infant when the war started. So how did you feel when your husband would go off a lot on those fishing trips. Were you . . .

KW: I missed him but I didn't feel anything. Maybe young, that's why, or what. When you mature, you feel little bit. I don't know. I missed him when he went out and stayed out ten days, but then at that time, I thought that was his job, so it didn't affect me too much. Being a fisherman, you know.

WN: And when he came home, was he home all the time or did he go to another job or something?

KW: No. He came home and then he stayed. When he come in today, next morning they go and take all the fish out and everything, clean. Then next morning they pack the ice and they go out. So three days, four days already they go out again for another [trip]. Yeah, that was rough.

WN: So going from country areas, you know, you lived Wahiawā and, you know, neighbor island and so forth. And then coming into Kukui Street which was—was it crowded to you?

KW: Crowded?

WN: Living in Honolulu.

KW: Well, Wahiawā was a good place, but Kukui Street, it was. . .

(Interview interrupted, then resumes.)

WN: So we were talking about Kukui Street and was it way different from living in Wahiawā?

KW: Oh yeah. I liked it, Wahiawā. Nice place, nice place. Kukui, we had good neighbors too, they were real good neighbors. Apartment *shita ni* get three families and then on the top get three families and I lived on the top and then next door to me, she lost her husband. He was a fisherman too. But not on that December 8. Maui, they had an accident and he died too. But the neighbors were real good. You know, that Kukui Street.

WN: Mostly Japanese?

KW: Yeah. Mostly.

WN: How big was your place?

KW: How big? The . . .

WN: Your apartment.

KW: Two bedroom, and the kitchen is small, you know. Not like here. We don't have tables. On the floor, Japanese style, we sit down [on] *goza*. You know the mat, *goza*? We eat lunch, breakfast on the floor. It's real small. The living room is just half of this [KW's present living room].

WN: So about nine by twelve [feet] or. . . .

KW: It was real small. And then two bedroom. So, my sister-in-law and my brother lived with me after my husband [was killed].

WN: What kind of work did your neighbors do? Do you know? One was fisherman you said.

KW: Most of them, Pearl Harbor [Naval] Shipyard, they worked. Young ones. I think they all worked at [Pearl Harbor Naval] Shipyard.

WN: How did your husband get to work? I mean, to Kewalo Basin?

KW: Bus. We didn't have no car or anything. He catch the bus to go.

WN: And between '38 and '41 when your husband died, did you work at all?

KW: Work? Before I gave birth, yeah. I was working as a maid in Nu'uuanu. I didn't work [after] Dickie was born. Until then I did work as a maid.

WN: When you were living in Kukui, did you feel like you were poor, or just right, or what?

KW: You mean, just right in what way?

WN: Were you folks satisfied with your standard of living?

KW: Over there? I guess so. Yeah, uh huh. It was nice, quiet place and the neighbors were real good, and convenient for me for work too. You know, after my husband died, the work is just about a block away from where I lived. So it was real convenient.

WN: Your husband was killed on December 8, 1941. Can you tell me what you remember about that day?

KW: What I remember . . .

WN: Let's start first with December 7.

KW: The neighbor boy was working [Pearl Harbor Naval] Shipyard and then he came home and he said, "Pearl Harbor been attacked." And I look out from the window, all bomb exploding, you can see the smoke. Well, I didn't have radio, you know, and we don't know. And then my uncle came and said, "Oh Kimiko, over there *senso natta itte kara*, Pearl Harbor attack *shitatte. Kiho mada modoran ka itte?*" ["Oh Kimiko, over there war started, Pearl Harbor was attacked. Hasn't Kiho returned yet?"]

And I said, "No." I wasn't worried about him because I figure, oh, they might have shortwave radio and they might know or something like that. *Modotte kuru no*. [They would

return.] And I thought, only Pearl Harbor, they bomb. But then of course, was kind of scary too.

WN: He was already out at sea.

KW: Four days already. He just left, you know. And then the war started. So I was kind of scared, but I didn't think I would have news like that. We didn't know until next morning. And my mom and my father was living Wahiawā. My mom came for the weekend that day and then my father wasn't feeling well. So my mother told me to go cook rice, put 'em on so when Papa come, you know, we can eat. And that was Monday morning [December 8, 1941]. And Dickie was playing around over here, crawling and this Uyehara *no* man came and he told me, "Oh, Kimi-chan, *Kiho shinde kara, no*, Queen's Hospital *ni tsurete kitoruke*." ["Oh Kimi, because Kiho has died he's been brought to Queen's Hospital."] I had a rice pot, I was going to cook rice. I dropped that and I grabbed Dickie and I cried. He [Uyehara] felt sorry for me and he said, "No, *shindoran ima byōin ittara miseru*." ["No, he's not dead. If you go to the hospital, I'll show you."] But I couldn't go. Until afternoon when my cousin came and then he took me down. But then when we went, they won't let us go in. In the hospital.

WN: Queen's Hospital.

KW: Yeah, Queen's Hospital. Security guard was over there all, so they won't let us go in. But what he said, "He was already dead," I got emotional, so he told me, "No, *shindoran kegashite tsurete kitorutte*." ["No, he's not dead, he's been brought in injured."]

WN: So he felt bad so he told you that he's not dead.

KW: See? And we couldn't go in to see. And my cousin went down and asked, "Oh, can the wife just see?" And they refused. You can't go in at that time, everything was restricted so when my sister-in-law, she used to work for Mr. [Theodore] Richards, you know and he . . .

WN: Mr. Richards?

KW: Yeah, Richards, you know [he lived on] Nu'uuanu Street, and he had this blackout light [on his car]. He took my sister-in-law to the mortuary. They went straight to Queen's [Hospital] mortuary and then that's where my sister-in-law found the brother dead. All sheets they wrap, so plenty people, all dead bodies. They had it wrapped up over there and then she saw the brother . . .

WN: Your husband?

KW: Yeah, my husband was already dead. And she said she saw it is so. But see, funeral we had to do it right away. You can't delay that right at the war. [They had the] funeral [for Sute-matsu] Kida, the father and son [Kiichi Kida], and then my husband [Kiho Uyehara]. But different times, you know, they had the funerals. That's the only time I saw my husband. And that's the first funeral that I went to. You know, all this time, before I got married, my parents used to go funerals. And when I got married, my husband was going to all the funerals. And my husband's was the first funeral I went. I remember was kind of funny feeling. It was rough.

WN: So you only got to see your husband when you---when Mr. Richards came along with you.

KW: My sister-in-law went, yeah. That's when I knew he died.

WN: Did you know right away that it was because of the war that he died?

KW: Well, after that December 7, yeah. And then [Seiki] Arakaki---the one [who] survived, he didn't say too much. I didn't see him at that time, but then they said it's from the war. Blood of the civilians *ga shinda ite*. And Kida, I went over there and the father and the son *ga shinda ite*. But at that time, I didn't know if over here people had killed or Japan *no* plane had killed.

WN: I was looking at the newspaper article [*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, December 7, 1977] and it had a picture of the *Kiho Maru*. That was the name of the boat?

KW: I thought my husband had [his own boat], you know, but I don't know what happened to that. At that time. I don't know what happened. It says *Kiho Maru*. I found one article all about that December 7, I gave it to Dickie.

WN: I found one and it has a picture of the---this is hard to see but, this is a boat, *Kiho Maru*.

KW: I think this is the one I think.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: So Mr. [Seiki] Arakaki was the lone survivor of that. So according to this newspaper article, it was on your husband's boat that---when they got killed. They were on your husband's boat.

KW: Gee, I really don't know that. You know at that time, young too, huh? And I don't know much about it and I didn't inquire to find out anything about that. So. But I know afterwards that Mr. Arakaki said anything. You know, at first they weren't supposed to talk nothing about this. You know. And then afterwards he said anything we want to know, he'll sign the affidavits. I only saw him twice after this thing happened. But I heard not too long ago from my sister-in-law, she said he died. I didn't know.

WN: Oh, recently?

KW: Yeah.

WN: So did your husband go out fishing with Mr. Kida and his son and Mr. Arakaki often? Was that . . .

KW: They were one group.

WN: One group all the time?

KW: Yeah, yeah. They were all---the *ahi* boat.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay, so you found out that your husband was killed. You had a son who was just an infant yet. How did you feel about what's going to happen to you?

KW: At that time? Chee. I don't know. I didn't think anything. I just felt lost and. . . . Young, that's why.

WN: Did you worry about finance? How were you going to make it financially?

KW: Yeah. That too. Because you don't have no insurance. He had, but it was just \$1,000 insurance and if you don't work for couple of months, that thing goes out like nothing, so I had to work right away.

WN: So your husband died, there was war going on, your son was an infant and then your father was ill, who died. That's a lot of pain for someone so young.

KW: Yeah. Well, my father, I don't know how he died, because he only was in the hospital *chotto* and then, you know.

WN: So your father and mother moved in with you?

KW: Just my mother because my father died one month after my husband died. So after he died, my mother came to live with me. She took care of Dickie while I went to work. Oh, she used to carry him all over the place. I give her credit, you know, my mother. She doesn't speak English, but she goes everywhere with the bus, she ask the bus man where she wants to go. And she used to go visit our friends in Pauoa. I give her real credit. Yeah, she was sweet. I missed her. I missed her more than I did my husband when my mother died.

WN: When did she die?

KW: When? In '45. She had a heart attack. I really missed her when she died.

WN: So how was it during the war? I mean, you know, after your husband died, I know there was blackouts and things like that. Did you folks manage okay?

KW: Oh, was terrible. Scary feeling, too. Every time you hear the siren, we have to get our gas mask and I had to get Dickie's diapers and clothes in one bag, so if we have to evacuate, I can just grab that and go. It was real scary feeling. You cannot put light on. Some people had the windows all blackout, but then, they said, "Oh, there's a light somewhere," this and that. But real scary feeling, especially nighttime. So what I did with my son, when I go to bed, I just put him on my arm and then I sleep. And I say, "If I'm going to die, I want him to die with me. I don't want him to be alive and I die," so I used to sleep like that all the time, every night. That's how I wanted. But thank God that we don't have to go through that.

WN: So how long was it that, you know, that during the war—you actually felt, when you would go to sleep at night that you may die?

KW: I thought if they going to bomb this place, I may as just well go together. I didn't want to leave him alone. See, at that time, we were only alone and my sister-in-law wasn't living with

me at that time. After my husband died, then she came and lived with me. But weekends like that, she'd go home. But then afterwards my mother came too so it wasn't too bad, you know.

WN: During those times, did you feel angry or sad or what?

KW: Well, I wasn't angry, but it was kind of sad because he's not around for Dickie. I was thinking mostly of Dickie, he doesn't have the father. So that kind of thing. Angry, I don't know, I didn't feel that much anger at that. I felt a lot of people died because of the war, you know. But I felt sorry for Dickie in not having his father. He doesn't remember anything. But he's real good to my husband, calls him Dad and my husband was real good to him too. Treat him just like his own son and he respected my husband too, so.

WN: So at that time, you didn't know if it was American planes or Japanese planes that shot them.

KW: No, not at that time. But afterwards, Arakaki must have told or said that it was over here *no* plane. And then the neighbors said the Japanese plane went attack over there, Pearl Harbor. You know, they were talking. I didn't know if was them [Japan] or the American till later. Arakaki said my husband folks was on the deck, on the sampan. And then the American planes came and then they shoot 'em. So three of them had no chance, but Arakaki, he got machine gun bullet on the leg and he went in the engine room and he stayed there. That's how he was saved.

WN: So your mother moved in, your sister[-in-law] moved in, so things got a little better for you.

KW: Oh yeah. My sister-in-law married my brother after my husband was killed. My brother was in the service at that time too, so he only come [home] on the weekends. And he didn't know that my husband [died]. He came one day with his uniform, with the rifle. He came to the house and my house was full with people. He was real shocked too. In fact, he wrote a letter to me, telling me to tell Kiho not to go out fishing because it's dangerous. But then I didn't get the letter until after he died. And then he [brother] came home that weekend and he found out. You know, everything, you cannot talk at that time. Everything was hush-hush. So he didn't know what was going on in our house and then when he came home that weekend, with the rifle and uniform, then he was real shocked that Kiho died. Yeah, those memories, little bit it hurts, but then, you know. (Pause)

WN: Do you remember anything about---well, that was December I mean, you had like Christmas and *Oshōgatsu*, do you remember what it was like that year?

KW: *Oshōgatsu* like that? Well, New Year's, like that, they used to all come to my parents' home in Wahiawā. So, I never did make anything at home because we all, you know, my brothers and sisters all go to my parents' house, New Year's Eve. And we spend the night and you prepare the food New Year's Eve for New Year's. So that was one of the things that we looked forward to. At home I never did do that.

WN: Did any policemen or anybody from the government come to your house after the incident?

KW: No. Nobody. Nobody came. Police or anything. To let us know anything. Only that Uyehara man, he came to let us know. To let me know that he died.

WN: And this Uyehara man was not related to your husband?

KW: No, good friend. I don't know if he's still living or not.

WN: Okay, well, during the war, your mother and your sister-in-law lived with you folks. And then your mother died in '45?

KW: Mm hmm [yes].

WN: And you continued to live at Kukui Street?

KW: Uh huh [yes]. And my sister-in-law lived with me, so when I went to work, she took care of Dickie, you know. Until the year I got married [1950] we lived together. Before that, they moved, you know, Dickie was already nine years old. And he used to go to Kauluwela School. So my sister-in-law started to work for another couple down at Kuli'ou'ou side. Well, not too long after that, then I met my husband [Tadao Watanabe].

WN: And then you got married in 1950.

KW: Yeah. [Before] I got married [in 1950], I was working first waitress and then I work at the [Libby, McNeill & Libby] cannery. And then when I got married, then I moved here [Waialua] and I was working cannery until I got my first boy [by second marriage]. And when I gave birth then I quit working already. So *koko kara* I was coming to Libby's cannery work every day.

WN: This Nakamae restaurant—what kind of a restaurant was it? What kind of food did they have?

KW: All kinds. Little bit Filipino food, I remember pork *palyá* soup, you know, *palyá*, bitter melon. And then American dish—they had all kind, steak and any kind, they had. Whatever they order they used to make.

WN: And you were the waitress.

KW: Yeah.

WN: What about at home? At home, what did you cook?

KW: My house? I hardly cooked. (Chuckles) I go to work at five o'clock [in the morning] and then come home—my mother used to do the cooking. So very seldom I cooked. We cook all kinds of things. We eat any kind (laughs).

WN: When your [first] husband was alive did you eat lot of fish?

KW: Oh yeah. Every time when he come home, he bring lot of fishes. That's why, I like fish even now. Well, that's good for me anyhow.

WN: Did your husband and you folks—did you folks have any parties?

KW: Parties? At home? We never did. Only my sister-in-law, the engagement party, with my brother when they got engaged, we did little party at the house. That's the only time we had

party. Other than that, we never did. Every time when we want to do something, we used to go to my parents' home and do it over there.

WN: Okay, so you worked Nakamae restaurant, Libby cannery, maid work primarily. How did you meet your second husband?

KW: When I was working cannery at Libby's. My forelady was a good friend, and then she told me, "Oh Kay, I want you to meet friend of ours."

And I said, "Does he drink? Does he gamble?" First thing I would ask.

And then she said, "No."

Then I said, "Okay." So we met.

WN: So from 1950 to now, you've been living here [Waiialua], in this house. From 1950 until the present you've been living in this house?

KW: And my husband folks was living here from 1945. This house is just about to cave in. But then, I'm not worried, it's real comfortable.

WN: Nice house.

KW: It is. I mean, every time I think about the homeless, I'm thankful for this house, we got roof over our head. And you think about that people live like the homeless, *kawaisō na*? Oh, pitiful I tell you. So I'm really thankful for this house. Maybe I'll die in this house (chuckles). It's real comfortable, the neighbors are real nice.

WN: So you know, you moved around a lot when you were a child. And then you got married to a fisherman and that was a very tragic time of your life, you know, when he died. And then you married a good man and you're settled over here and you're happy. Anything you want to say about your life?

KW: Well, I think I lived a good life. Now, I'll enjoy. All this time I've been taking care of my husband, bedridden. He was a good patient. He was really good. [Tadao Watanabe died a short time prior to this interview.] We had good marriage, with my husband, this one. He was real good. Anyhow, after I've taken care of him, the three doctors that he was under, tell me, "Oh, Mrs. Watanabe, you really take good care of your husband here."

I said, "Yes, well he's a good patient." And then I told my boys, "You know my first priority is taking care of Daddy, you folks take care of your own self." So they understand, so they cook themselves when I don't cook. Now that he's gone and he's with the Lord, not suffering, I can enjoy life a little bit. And lot of people tell me, "Yeah, go and have vacation. Go wherever you want to go." Well, I will (laughs). That's why yesterday my girlfriend called and several of the Tripler Hospital girls, you know, ladies came. They wanted to come see me. They came when my husband died, but then me and Dickie went to the mortuary to make funeral arrangements, so I missed them and then they wanted to see me. And they didn't want to go to that mortuary. Both of them are widow. And then, you know, that mortuary, have you been to Mililani Mortuary?

WN: No.

KW: It's way inside. And then . . .

WN: Oh, is it near the cemetery?

KW: Yeah.

WN: Oh yeah, okay. That's near my house.

KW: Huh?

WN: Waipi'o Gentry, yeah?

KW: Yeah, Waipi'o, Mililani Cemetery. Hey, spooky over there! (Chuckles)

WN: Nighttime? I never went at night.

(Laughter)

KW: They didn't want to go, drive alone. Of course if you go with your husband it's okay. So anyhow, they came yesterday. And then I told them have lunch over here. She said, "No, no, no." My other lady friend said, "No Kay, I don't want you to work, you rest. Come over and have lunch with us." So we all went over there. And see, this lady called me one day, one of my lady friend, and she told me, "Watanabe-san, let's go Japan."

And then I said, "Okay." That was June, they make reservation. And she already got partner and I didn't know if I could go or not, because my husband was still living. I couldn't leave him and go. So yesterday one of the other ladies said, "Oh Watanabe-san, you and I share one room and we go."

I said, "Oh okay, thank you." So my lady friend called Tohoku Travel [Service]. They're all booked. Got eleven people waiting on the list. So, cannot go. So she told me, "Let's go [Las] Vegas."

(Laughter)

WN: So you folks going Vegas?

KW: I don't know. I like over there. To rest, it's good.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops then resumes.)

WN: Do you think about the past a lot?

KW: No.

WN: Or do you want to think about it or you don't want to think about it?

KW: I don't. Only, you know, when December 8, then I put a bouquet of flowers at the church in

memory of my husband. Other than that, I never did go to graveyard, you know? My husband [Kiho Uyehara] is buried at Mō'ili'ili. You know, I never been there for over fifty years. So I told my brother, "Oh, one of these days, take me down." You know, my brother made big cement [gravestone] so the family, Tengan family, can go inside. But I never did go see. So only [on December 8], that's the only time that I think of it. And I put a bouquet of flowers [at church].

WN: You were telling me too that you were going to go to visit the [USS] *Arizona* Memorial for part of the fiftieth anniversary [commemoration of the Pearl Harbor attack].

KW: I did go. My lady friend took me and we thought the names [would] get inscribed on that cement [plaque containing names of civilian casualties of the Pearl Harbor attack]. When we went, only few Japanese names had on top. And we couldn't find it, so my lady friend from Alaska, she went to inquire the information and all that and then they sent us to the record place. And then they had over there, record "Kiho Uyehara, [Sutematsu and Kiichi] Kida" and all that, you know, plenty list of people. That's the only place. But they said they didn't put it up [on the plaque] because if the report was saying that he died nine o'clock or ten o'clock or something like that, it would go in. But [if the incident occurred] after that, it didn't go in. Or something like that. [The incident occurred between nine o'clock and nine-thirty A.M., December 8, 1941.] That's what they told us. We thought we would see the names.

WN: Your husband's name wasn't on [the plaque]?

KW: No. No. Even Kida and the son didn't have.

WN: I heard that they wanted to just have those who died on December 7 or something. That's too bad. So did you go to the ceremonies at all?

KW: No. I didn't want to go. Oh, [people] said, "Oh the Japanese should apologize," and this and that. And I told Dickie, "They [U.S.] didn't apologize to us. After they killed my husband over here, our government—they didn't apologize to us." I didn't feel good so I didn't go. I told him, "No, I don't think I should go [to the ceremonies held on December 7, 1992], you know." So we didn't go.

WN: So I know a few years ago, you folks were trying to inquire about some kind of compensation [i.e., reparations].

KW: Yeah, but I guess that won't go through, huh? Well, it's already fifty years. I'm not expecting, but then people say, might as well [try]. But I know they not going to give.

WN: Well, I want to thank you very much for your time.

KW: Oh, thank you for coming. I hope (laughs), I listen to that, it sounds so funny.

WN: Well, I know it's really difficult for you to think about something like that, that happened. But I appreciate it. Thank you.

KW: Thank you for taking your time to come out.

END OF INTERVIEW

AN ERA OF CHANGE

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